

CONCLUSION OF MORNING
BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

NEW DIRECTION FOR ENERGY
INDEPENDENCE, NATIONAL SE-
CURITY, AND CONSUMER PRO-
TECTION ACT AND THE RENEW-
ABLE ENERGY AND ENERGY
CONSERVATION TAX ACT OF 2007

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 3221, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3221) moving the United States toward greater energy independence and security, developing innovative new technologies, reducing carbon emissions, creating green jobs, protecting consumers, increasing clean renewable energy production, and modernizing our energy infrastructure, and to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide tax incentives for the production of renewable energy and energy conservation.

Pending:

Dodd/Shelby amendment No. 4387, in the nature of a substitute.

Sanders modified amendment No. 4401 (to amendment No. 4387), to establish a maximum rate of interest for loans insured under title II of the National Housing Act.

Cardin/Ensign amendment No. 4421 (to amendment No. 4387), to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a credit against income tax for the purchase of a principal residence by a first-time home buyer.

Ensign amendment No. 4419 (to amendment No. 4387), to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for the limited continuation of clean energy production incentives and incentives to improve energy efficiency in order to prevent a downturn in these sectors that would result from a lapse in the tax law.

Alexander amendment No. 4429 (to amendment No. 4419), to provide a longer extension of the renewable energy production tax credit and to encourage all emerging renewable sources of electricity.

Nelson (FL)/Coleman amendment No. 4423 (to amendment No. 4387), to provide for the penalty-free use of retirement funds to provide foreclosure recovery relief for individuals with mortgages on their principal residences.

Lincoln amendment No. 4382 (to amendment No. 4387), to provide an incentive to employers to offer group legal plans that provide a benefit for real estate and foreclosure review.

Lincoln (for Snowe) amendment No. 4433 (to amendment No. 4387), to modify the increase in volume cap for housing bonds in 2008.

Landrieu amendment No. 4404 (to amendment No. 4387), to amend the provisions relating to qualified mortgage bonds to include relief for persons in areas affected by Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma.

Sanders amendment No. 4384 (to amendment No. 4387), to provide an increase in specially adapted housing benefits for disabled veterans.

Murray amendment No. 4478 (to amendment No. 4387), to increase funding for housing counseling with an offset.

Mikulski amendment No. 4494 (to amendment No. 4478), to make additional funds

available to the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation to increase legal assistance available to homeowners at risk of foreclosure and assistance to community organizations working to preserve home ownership and prevent foreclosure, with an offset.

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORKER. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONGRATULATING TENNESSEE VOLUNTEERS AND
THE UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS

Mr. CORKER. Madam President, I rise today, while business is slow in the Senate, to send my strong congratulations to the University of Tennessee Lady Vols who again excelled and set an example for our country in the way they conducted themselves.

Pat Summitt has a tremendous legacy in our State. She is someone who not only is an outstanding coach and has won eight national championships, but she also teaches players life examples and ways to be successful later in life. Our students who play on the Lady Vols team are steeped and focused on academics and being successful later in life. The way she has led the Vols and led our State by her actions and the way this team has excelled is something to be congratulated and certainly makes all of us in Tennessee and in our country proud.

I also extend my congratulations to the University of Memphis. Memphis has also done an outstanding job. Coach John Calapiari has been a great addition to our State. While they fell short earlier this week in reaching the national championship, they still raised our excitement level in Tennessee and our tremendous respect for the University of Memphis and what they have accomplished. I am sure at some point in the near future they will achieve the ultimate goal they have of winning the national championship. My hat is off to both of these outstanding coaches, to both of these teams and programs which focus on student excellence and making sure players are prepared for life. I join Tennesseans all across the State in congratulating them and telling them how proud we are of all of them.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, last Saturday, I held two town meetings in Vermont on the collapse of the middle class, and both of them were very well attended. Our guest speaker was Elizabeth Warren, who is a professor of law at Harvard Law School and one of the leading writers in this country on economic matters.

In preparation for that meeting, I sent out an e-mail on my Web site just asking people in Vermont to tell me their personal experiences regarding what is happening to the middle class. We have done that in the past and, frankly, I expected we would get a couple dozen responses. What happened was really astounding to me and speaks about what is going on in the economy in this country today. Over a period of a few days, we have now had some 500 responses, mostly from Vermont, but also I do a national radio show, and we made a similar request nationally, and we have had some from out of State. They are mostly from Vermont, some from out of State, but a total of some 500 responses.

What was absolutely astounding was the nature of these responses. They were so powerful, so overwhelming, that, in fact, they were sometimes difficult to read. Person after person wrote with amazing honesty and with an articulateness which comes from telling the truth. They were not giving a great speech, as we often do here in the Senate, talking about everything under the Sun. They were talking from their own hearts. They were talking about what it means to be trying to raise kids, trying to send your kids to college, trying to pay your fuel bills, fill up your gas tank when you get to work—amazing stories. We are going to post many of them on our Web site.

What I want to do this morning, because I think it is terribly important that the Senate hears from ordinary people to get a sense of what is really going on in America, the struggles people are having—maybe it is a good idea we hear from the people rather than just campaign contributors, rather than just lobbyists. The language I heard that came to my Web site was extraordinary. So what I want to do this morning—I have the feeling I will be doing it more than once—is just have you listen to what people have to say, reading exactly the words they have written to me.

Let me begin by reading an e-mail that came from a small town in northern Vermont. I am going to do my best to disguise the identities of the writers. But this is from a small town near the Canadian border. This is what this writer says:.

My family has been squeezed for years now. My husband and I have two children. My husband works full time and has a degree. He works 60 miles away from home, and has tried to find a new job closer but has been unable to do so. I tried for 2 years to find a job, when I could not find a job I went back to school. I am hoping that my degree will help our family.